

Naval Chaplaincy School and Center returns to Newport

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FULL TEXT

NEWPORT, R.I.

The Naval Chaplaincy School and Center (NCSC) celebrated its return to Naval Station Newport, after an 11-year absence, with a ribbon cutting ceremony at Brett Hall, March 13.

The Naval Chaplains School, as NCSC was once known as, resided in a building at Naval Station Newport, dedicated and named for Lt. Robert Raymond Brett, a Navy chaplain killed in action while serving with Marines in Vietnam in 1968. In 2009, NCSC moved from Naval Station Newport's Brett Hall to Fort Jackson, South Carolina as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Bringing chaplain and religious program specialists (RP) training together, the combined training location was renamed the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center. In March 2019, the NCSC returned to Newport, Rhode Island and to its historic home in Brett Hall. Throughout a year of renovations and updates, the NCSC continued to train chaplains and RPs and to develop and deliver ready, relevant religious ministry training to achieve fleet readiness. Initial training for chaplains occurs at NCSC in Newport and initial RP training in Meridian, Mississippi. Throughout their careers, chaplains and RPs return to NCSC for further rank-based training.

"I'm very excited about NCSC's return to Newport," said Lt. Cmdr. Justin Hayes, an instructor at NCSC. "By moving back here we're reconnecting with our roots as Sailors. Those who leave here go to their commands ready to help strengthen the warfighter's spirit. A lot of the different weights we carry on our shoulders can degrade mission readiness, and it's the chaplain's role to be someone who breathes fresh life into the fighting spirit of the warrior." Brett Hall's namesake felt called to become a Catholic priest from a young age and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Navy in June 1967. On Feb. 22, 1968, five months after arriving in Vietnam and six months after graduating from Naval Chaplains School, Brett and his Marine chaplain assistant, Cpl. Alexander Chin, were in the midst of the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh. A helicopter arrived at their position, which Brett and Chin intended to board but they waived off and returned to the trench, aware that the Marines were continuing to take fire and that care would need to be offered. Moments later, the area was attacked with a barrage of 122mm rockets, with at least one hitting their trench. Brett and Chin were killed, along with six other Marines.

All NCSC students are encouraged to uphold Brett's example through his ministry of presence, continued care, and selfless devotion to duty with Brett embodying the Chaplain Corps motto, *Vocati ad Servitium*, "Called to Serve." Brett and Chin's legacies continue to reverberate in the halls of NCSC where chaplains and RPs prepare to be with Sailors, Marines, and Coastguardsmen when the next fight comes.

Caption: Capt. Steven R. Moses, commanding officer of Naval Chaplaincy School and Center (NCSC), right, and Rear Adm. Brent W. Scott, Navy Chief of Chaplains, left, cut the ribbon to formally commemorate the relocation of NCSC to Naval Station Newport and Brett Hall. NCSC develops and delivers religious ministry training to achieve fleet readiness.

MC2 Derien C. Luc

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